



Office of Childhood
Office of Special Education
March 2024

Annual Report on Children Referred to First Steps for the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA): Calendar Year 2023

Purpose

Under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act or CAPTA (Public Law 111-320), a referral of a child under the age of three who is involved in a substantiated case of abuse or neglect must be made to the early intervention program funded by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In Missouri, the Part C of IDEA is known as First Steps.

The Missouri First Steps program contracts with a System Point of Entry (SPOE) in ten regions throughout the state. Each SPOE is responsible for the local administration of the program, including referral, intake, eligibility determination, and Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) development.

The Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS), Children's Division requires staff to refer any child under age three who meets the criteria of CAPTA to First Steps. This report provides information related to the children referred to First Steps with a referral source of CAPTA or DSS in calendar year 2023.

Children Referred to the First Steps Program

In calendar year 2023, 983 children were referred to the First Steps program by the Department of Social Services Children's Division. Of the 983 children, 501 children (51.0%) had a referral source of CAPTA, and 482 children (49.0%) had a referral source of DSS.

Of the 501 children referred with a referral source of CAPTA, 119 children (23.8%) were found eligible and reached the status of an IFSP. The remaining 382 children did not reach IFSP status due to the following reasons: 213 were withdrawn by a parent or guardian; 75 were Part C ineligible; 63 were unable to contact/locate; 25 were inquiry only*; three were refused by SPOE; and three had moved out of state.

Of the 482 children referred with a referral source of DSS, 169 children (35.1%) were found eligible and reached the status of an IFSP. The remaining 313 children did not reach IFSP status due to the following reasons: 120 were withdrawn by a parent or guardian; 101 were Part C ineligible; 62 were unable to contact/locate; 21 were inquiry only*; six were refused by SPOE; two had moved out of state; and one was deceased.

*Referral records that were closed with the reason *inquiry only* were included in this report. Inquiry only refers to those who are only seeking more information about the child or program.

Active Children by SPOE Region

Table 1 represents the 501 children referred to First Steps with a referral source of CAPTA and their eligibility percentages by SPOE region.

Table 1. CAPTA Referrals and First Steps Status for Calendar Year 2023

SPOE Region	Referred to First Steps	Reached IFSP	% Served
Region 1 - Greater St. Louis	18	3	16.7%
Region 2 - St. Louis County	37	12	32.4%
Region 3 - Northeast	41	5	12.2%
Region 4 - Northwest	10	1	10.0%
Region 5 - Greater Kansas City	67	24	35.8%
Region 6 - Central	28	7	25.0%
Region 7 - Southwest	26	9	34.6%
Region 8 - South Central	101	27	26.7%
Region 9 - East Central	60	9	15.0%
Region 10 - Southeast	113	22	19.5%
Total	501	119	23.8%

Table 2 represents the 482 children referred to First Steps with a referral source of DSS and their eligibility percentages by SPOE region.

Table 2. DSS Referrals and First Steps Status for Calendar Year 2023

SPOE Region	Referred to First Steps	Reached IFSP	% Served
Region 1 - Greater St. Louis	44	23	52.3%
Region 2 - St. Louis County	77	26	33.8%
Region 3 - Northeast	40	21	52.5%
Region 4 - Northwest	29	7	24.1%
Region 5 - Greater Kansas City	58	15	25.9%
Region 6 - Central	29	11	37.9%
Region 7 - Southwest	24	12	50.0%
Region 8 - South Central	86	22	25.6%
Region 9 - East Central	53	17	32.1%
Region 10 - Southeast	42	15	35.7%
Total	482	169	35.1%

For a map of the SPOE regions, visit the First Steps website at:

<https://dese.mo.gov/media/pdf/first-steps-spoec-contact-information-region>

Authorizations

Table 3 represents the First Steps service authorizations for the 119 children referred to First Steps with a referral source of CAPTA who received First Steps services. As of February 2024, there were a total of 410 active authorizations for the 119 children who had authorized services.

Table 3. First Steps Service Authorizations for Children Referred by CAPTA

Service Type	Authorization Count	Percentage
Early Intervention Testing	103	25.1%
Occupational Therapy	96	23.4%
Special Instruction	91	22.2%
Physical Therapy	53	12.9%
Speech Language Pathology	47	11.5%
Assistive Technology	6	1.5%
Social Work	4	1.0%
Dietary/Nutrition Services	4	1.0%
Sign/Cued Language Services	2	0.5%
Behavior Services	2	0.5%
Vision Services	1	0.2%
Counseling	1	0.2%
Grand Total	410	100.0%

Table 4 represents the First Steps service authorizations for the 169 children referred to First Steps with a referral source of DSS who received First Steps services. As of February 2024, there were a total of 649 active authorizations for the 169 children.

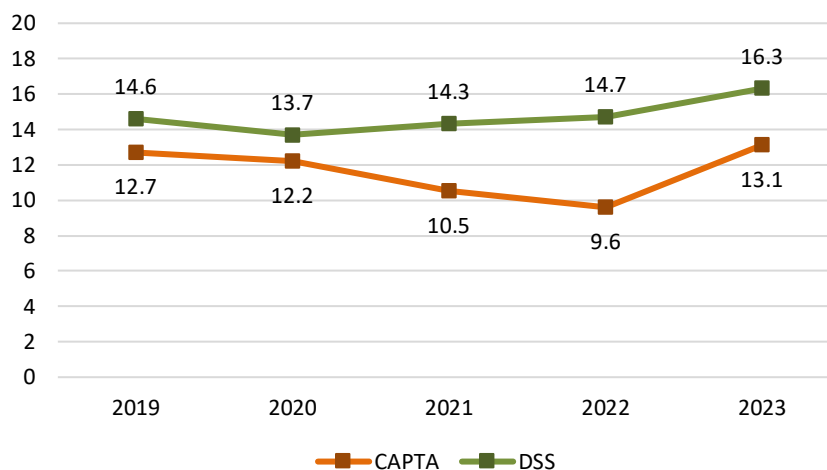
Table 4. First Steps Service Authorizations for Children Referred by DSS

Service Type	Authorization Count	Percentage
Early Intervention Testing	148	22.8%
Special Instruction	128	19.7%
Occupational Therapy	112	17.3%
Physical Therapy	96	14.8%
Speech Language Pathology	96	14.8%
Assistive Technology	17	2.6%
Dietary/Nutrition Services	15	2.3%
Translation Services	10	1.5%
Social Work	8	1.2%
Audiology	4	0.6%
Behavior Services	8	1.2%
Counseling	3	0.5%
Vision Services	2	0.3%
Team Meeting - Eligibility	2	0.3%
Grand Total	649	100.0%

Referral Source and Average Age

Table 5 represents the average age, in months, of the 501 children referred to First Steps by CAPTA and the 482 children referred to First Steps by DSS. The average age of children referred to First Steps in 2023 was 13.1 months for CAPTA referrals and 16.3 months for DSS referrals.

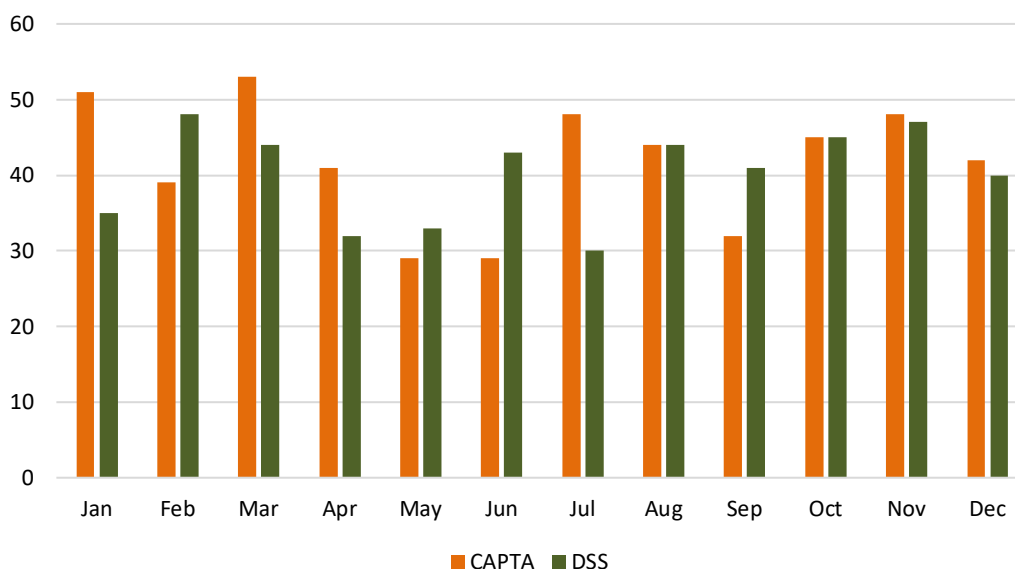
Table 5. Average Age in Months of Children Referred



Referral Source and Referral Month

Table 6 represents the number of children by referral sources and referral month. On average, 42 children were referred by CAPTA and 40 children were referred by DSS each month in 2023. The largest number of children were referred by CAPTA in March and DSS in February, whereas the smallest number of children were referred by CAPTA in May and June and by DSS in July.

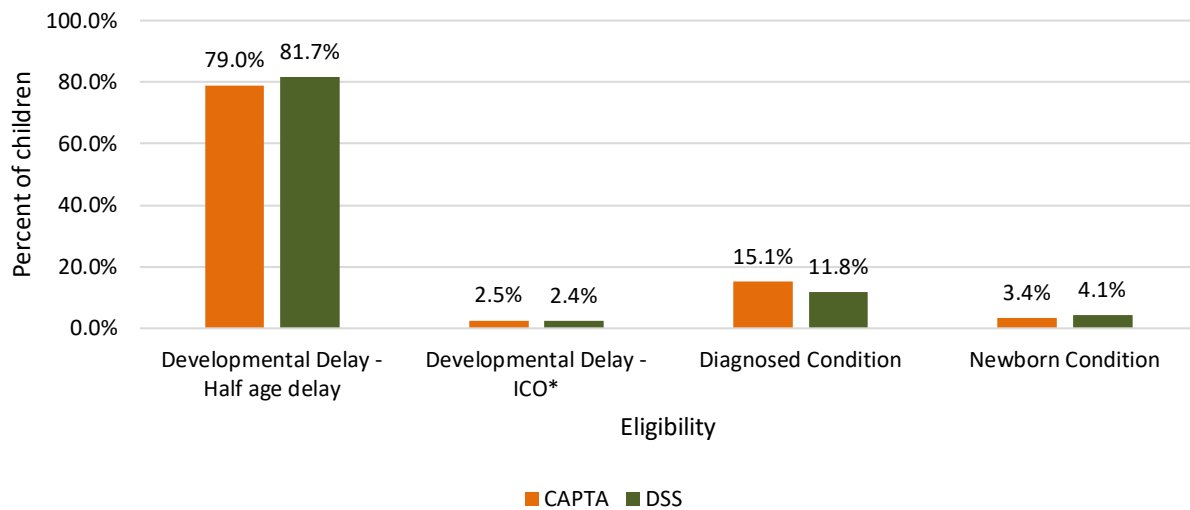
Table 6. Number of Children by Referral Source and Referral Month in 2023



Referral Source and Eligibility

Table 7 represents the percent of children who were referred by CAPTA and DSS and by eligibility category. Approximately 80 percent of eligible children were in Developmental Delay - Half age delay category. About 15 percent of children referred by CAPTA and 12 percent of children referred by DSS had a Diagnosed Condition. About 3 percent of children referred by CAPTA and 4 percent of children referred by DSS had a Newborn Condition.

Table 7. Percent of Children by Referral Source and Eligibility



*Informed Clinical Opinion (ICO)